

QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIAN CITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE REFORM

Abstract

Quality of life is a concept used in all areas of economic and social life. It is a subjective concept, complex, with a multidisciplinary and multidimensional features.

In this paper we want to study quality of life and the hierarchy of romanian cities in this regard.

For the measurement the quality of life in the fourth romanian cities it is necessary using a set of criteria and indicators. We considered relevant as parameters to be chosen and to be structured in five areas, which can provide a cumulative picture of the quality of life. So we tried both from the perspective of identifying indicators on quality of life and from the perspective of the individual, as a single entity. So we consider that when we talk about quality of life we must cover the following areas: environment, economics, social issues, education and culture. We tried to identify the most relevant indicators for these areas, but the choice is influenced by data availability. The data used for the preparation of this study are nationally available statistical data, and local later interpreted, discussed and compared.

Keywords: life quality, cities, indicators, criteria, consequences, utilities, improvement measures.

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CALITATEA VIETII ÎN ORAȘELE ROMÂNEȘTI ÎN CONTEXTUL REFORMEI STATULUI

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Rezumat

Calitatea vietii este un concept utilizat in toate domeniile vietii economice si sociale. Este un concept subiectiv, complex, avand un caracter multidisciplinar si multidimensional.

In lucrarea de fata se doreste studierea calitatii vietii si ierarhizarea unor orase romanesti din acest punct de vedere.

Pentru a putea masura calitatea vietii in cele 4 orase romanesti supuse analizei este necesar un set de indicatori cu criterii si subcriterii specifice. Am considerat relevant ca indicatorii care trebuie alesi sa fie structurati in cinci domenii, care cumulate sa poata oferi o imagine de ansamblu asupra calitatii vietii. Astfel am incercat identificarea indicatorilor atat din perspectiva societatii asupra calitatii vietii cat si din perspectiva individului ca entitate singulara.

Asadar, consideram ca atunci cand vorbim de calitatea vietii trebuie sa ne referim la urmatoarele domenii: mediu, economie, aspecte sociale, educatie si cultura. Am incercat identificarea celor mai relevanti indicatori pentru aceste domenii, alegerea fiind insa influentata si de disponibilitatea datelor. Datele folosite pentru intocmirea acestui studiu sunt date statistice disponibile la nivel national, dar si local care au fost apoi interpretate, comentate si comparate.

Cuvinte cheie: calitatea vietii, orase, indicatori, criterii, consecinte, utilitati, masuri de imbunatatire.



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1. THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN ROMANIA

Quality of life is a concept used in all areas of economic and social life. It is also a subjective concept, complex, with a multidisciplinary and multidimensional features.

Quality of life expresses the better or worse character in people's lives. The whole society should contribute to improving the living conditions of all its members.

Quality of life is generated also by a sustainable urban management, which includes: decent housing for all members of society, poverty and inequality at minimum levels, safety and protection of the population, integration of all groups in society and, last but not least, a healthy environment.

Currently in Romania increased quality of life is a vital necessity and should be a political and economic objective to reach a standard of living to an acceptable level defined in the European context. Quality of life includes all physical conditions, economic, social, cultural, political, health, etc., in which people live, the content and nature of activities they carry, relationship characteristics and social processes involving the goods and services they have access models of consumption, and how lifestyle, circumstances and results have met people's expectations, subjective states of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, happiness, frustration, etc.. Quality of life depends on the simultaneous satisfaction of all necessary and harmonious human needs: living conditions, social and economic security, health, leisure, culture, education, etc. organized national society. (Marginean et al (2010)).

The quality of urban life is determined by air quality, noise, waste management of any type, status green spaces, recreational areas, and the quality of available services.

In a report made in 2010 by the Quality of Life Research Institute of the Romanian Academy, it is estimated that 72% of Romanians live worse than in 2009. This report also brings some interesting conclusions:

- The level of optimism of the Romanian people is lower than the period of crisis between 11-12 years, 1998-1999;
- 86% of respondents are dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with politics. Records show the strongest dissatisfaction with the policies of the past 20 years;
- We notice a general tendency of degradation of living conditions of the Romanian people, people experienced a worsening of living conditions compared with 2009, which can be maintained in coming years;

- In the next period, continuing the trend from now, the biggest fears of the population, may look up to increasing prices, reduced wages, increasing taxes and increasing unemployment; 52% of Romanians are pessimistic about the future and do not believe in chance to overcome this period, which is a serious population crash and demotivation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Schuessler and Fisher (1985), in his "Quality of Life Research and Sociology" notices a tendency of reducing the notion of quality of life in mental elements, although they show a tendency to include the surrounding conditions in the field or considering them factors.

Preuss and Vemuri (2004), have created a model in which different individual indicators led to the creation of three groups of indicators measuring the quality of life, each containing a number of sub-indices: environmental health (ecosystem quality, water quality, energy consumption, green space area) economic health (standard of living, taxation, the growth rate of employment) and social health (population density, land area per capita, employment rate).

Ulengin et al (2004) have determined the attributes that define quality of life in Istanbul, following a review and a survey of city residents from different socio-economic classes. The attributes were grouped into four distinct classes, having in turn a series of sub-attributes such as quality of physical environment (type of housing, green areas, recreational areas, infrastructure and municipal services), quality of social environment (educational services, price of educational services, health services, cultural and entertainment activities and public safety), quality of the economic environment (the standard of living, the opportunity to find a satisfactory job, accommodation costs) and quality of transport and communications (media, public transport, traffic).

Fahy and Cinneide (2007) performed a study that focuses on quality of life in direct correlation with sustainable development, in order to establish an operational framework for assessing quality of life in an urban area. The basic principles of sustainable development are translated into a set of operational criteria in order to investigate the quality of life. Indicators identified by the authors are quantitative and qualitative. Emphasis was placed on qualitative indicators, more difficult to calculate and have a subjective nature.

Morais and Camanho (2010) also address to quality of life using multiple criteria and sub-criteria to assess quality of life and also evaluate the performance of managers of cities in terms of promoting the quality of urban life. The main indicators that have been the subject of the study were: demographic issues, social issues, economic, civic, education, environment, transport, culture, etc..

Lee (2008), presents both qualitative indicators and quantitative those whom they consider important in measuring quality of life. The author believes that measuring quality of life can be used as a diagnosis of environmental quality and is a basis for developing future planning policy and planning.

3. CASE STUDY: QUALITY OF LIFE ASSESSMENT IN BRASOV, CLUJ, IASI AND BUCHAREST ON THE SET OF SELECTED INDICATORS

In this case we want to study quality of life and the hierarchy of Romanian cities in this regard. After consulting the literature it was concluded that in order to measure quality of life in Brasov, Cluj, Iasi and Bucharest it is necessary using the following set of criteria and indicators. We considered relevant as parameters to be chosen and be structured in five areas, which can provide a cumulative picture of the quality of life. So I tried both from the perspective of identifying indicators on quality of life and from the perspective of the individual as a single entity. So we consider that when we talk about quality of life we must cover the following areas: environment, economics, social issues, education and culture. We tried to identify the most relevant indicators for these areas, but the choice is influenced by data availability. The data used for the preparation of this study are nationally available statistical data, and local later interpreted, discussed and compared.

In Table 1 we can see the five types of indicators (criteria) with specific subcriteria

TABLE 1 – TYPES OF INDICATORS

Indicators for quality of life measurement	
Indicators/Criteria	Subcriteria
1. Environment aspects	
	Area of green spaces (parks, public gardens, squares etc.). (ha)-C1
	Related green area per capita (sqm/inhabitant)-C2
2. Economic aspects	
	The average gross salary (lei /employer)-C3
	Average net (lei/employer-) C4
	Employment (no. pers.)-C5
	Unemployment rate (%)-C6
	GDP/capita (lei/inhabitant)-C7
	The average price of homes (2 rooms) (euro)-C8
3. Social aspects	
	Number of people-C9
	The average life (years)-C10
	Crime rate (crimes per 100 thousand inhabitants)-C11
	Crime rates (sentenced to 100 thousand inhabitants)-C12
	Number of homeless people (no.)-C13
	Population density (people/sq km)-C14
4. Educational aspects	
	Resident population with higher education-C15
	Resident population with secondary-C16
	Resident population with secondary education, primary or no education-C17
5. Cultural aspects	
	Libraries-C18
	Cinemas-C19

The table below shows the consequences, the study noted variations, namely the four cities examined and the criteria, namely the 19 indicators set for analysis.

TABLE 2 – TABLE OF CONSEQUENCES

Criteria	Bucharest	Brasov	Cluj	Iasi
C1 (ha)	3000	522.66	1342.2621	1070.1521
C2 (sqm / inhabitant)	15.57	8.8	19.1	13.1
C3 (lei / employer)	2712	1905	1957	1817
C4 (lei / employer)	1946	1393	1427	1356
C5 (no pers.)	1946000	239600	334600	295800
C6 (%)	2.65	8.03	5.96	7.6
C7 (lei /inhabitant)	60653.75	29361.80	31564.77	17251.59
C8 (2 rooms) (euro)	58815	48200	52000	49900
C9 (no.)	1926334	593928	702755	816910
C10 (years)	74.78	73.84	74.03	73.52
C11 (crimes per 100 thousand inhabitants)	1329	1407	1426	1074
C12 (sentenced to 100 000 inhabitants)	124	152	162	178
C13 (no. of persons)	5000	6	753	238
C14 (inhabitants / sqkm)	8687.2	119.9	110.3	148.2
C15 (no. of persons)	342000	147000	163000	189000
C16 (no. of persons)	606000	723000	704000	902000
C17 (no. of persons)	84000	157000	261000	583000
C18 (no.)	404	216	412	571
C19 (no.)	18	2	7	5

We will analyze the quality of life in every city of the four mentioned considering the set of indicators identified. In carrying out this process will use global utility method. This method facilitates the optimal choice and it is logical to anticipate benefits supported by various possible actions. Best option is set according to different criteria and coefficients important decision.

Utility method involves drawing global economic consequences matrix (Table 2) and utilities (Table 3). It establishes an algorithm that gives a global index that allows comparisons between these Romanian cities analyzed. Finally we choose the best option, as that for the global utility records the highest value. (Alpopi et al (2011)). Transforming consequences values of Table 2, the utilities (Table 3) which will allow calculation of quality indicators for each city and then ranking them is via the formula:

$$U_{ij} = \frac{C_{ij} - C_j^0}{C_j^i - C_j^0},$$

where :

U_{ij} – version utility them according to j ;

C_{ij} – variant and therefore the criterion j ;

C_{j0} – worst consequence;

C_{j1} – best consequence.

Example :

$$U_{31} = \frac{1342.2621 - 522.66}{3000 - 522.66} = 0.33$$

$$U_{41} = \frac{15.57 - 8.8}{19.1 - 8.8} = 0.66$$

TABLE 3 – TABLE OF UTILITIES

Criteria	Bucharest (1)	Brasov (2)	Cluj (3)	Iasi (4)
C1 (ha)	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.22
C2 (sqm /inhabitant)	0.66	0.00	1.00	0.42
C3 (lei / employer)	1.00	0.10	0.16	0.00
C4 (lei / employer)	1.00	0.11	0.16	0.00
C5 (no pers.)	1.00	0.00	0.06	0.03
C6 (%)	1.00	0.00	0.38	0.08
C7 (lei /inhabitant)	1.00	0.28	0.33	0.00
C8 (2 rooms) (euro)	0.00	1.00	0.64	0.84
C9 (no)	0.00	1.00	0.92	0.83
C10 (years)	1.00	0.25	0.40	0.00
C11 (crimes per 100 thousand inhabitants)	0.28	0.01	0.00	1.00
C12 (sentenced to 100 000 inhabitants)	1.00	0.48	0.30	0.00
C13 (no. of persons)	0.00	1.00	0.85	0.95
C14 (inhabitants / sqkm)	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
C15 (no. of persons)	1.00	0.00	0.08	0.22
C16 (no. of persons)	0.00	0.40	0.33	1.00
C17 (no. of persons)	1.00	0.76	0.41	0.00
C18 (no.)	0.53	0.00	0.55	1.00
C19 (no.)	1.00	0.00	0.31	0.19
TOTAL	12.47	6.39	8.21	7.78

Considering that all the criteria (indicators) are equally important to establish the hierarchy of cities, it is calculated for each city the utility overall, by summing partial utilities.

So :

$$V1 = 1.00 + 0.66 + 1.00 + \dots + 1.00 = 12.47$$

$$V2=0.00+0.00+0.1+ \dots +0.00=6.39$$

$$V3=0.33+1.00+0.16+ \dots +0.31=8.21$$

$$V4=0.22+0.42+0.00+ \dots +0.19=7.78$$

4. RESULTS INTERPRETING

Following the calculation result of the year for which was made this study - 2010 – the hierarchy of the cities on quality of life is: Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi and Brasov then.

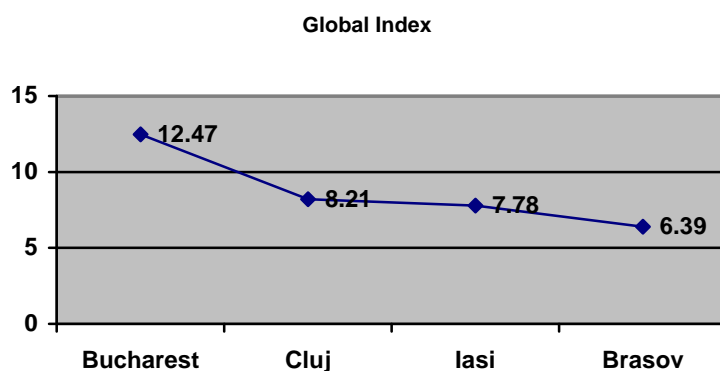
The result we reached is explained by the fact that, as seen in Table 2, Bucharest is the first of four in terms of total area of green space value, net average wage, employment, unemployment, GDP/capita, life expectancy, crime rates, resident population with higher education. Instead, Bucharest was the last of the four in terms of average price of housing, the number of homeless, population density ecc.

Cluj, located on the second of four, recorded as strengths: green area per capita, population density and crime rate as weakness.

Iasi, in third place, registered as strengths: crime rate, population density ecc., and the weak points: the average net wage, GDP/capita, life expectancy, crime rates and population residing in secondary education, primary or without studies.

Brasov, which resulted that ranks last in the four analyzed, registered yet as strengths: the average price of housing, number of inhabitants, the number of homeless and population density. Weaknesses are registered to the total area of green space, employment, unemployment, resident population with higher education ecc.

The graphic below illustrates the position that ranks each city, and overall quality index value.



The results indicate the current state of quality of life in each city analyzed, allowing their mutual comparison and stimulate action to improve the situation, showing that they demand immediate attention from local and central authorities, and it is also a starting point to identify measures to improve in the future.

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